

**BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT  
PANEL A**

**IN RE: JAMES SCOTT ADAMS**  
Arkansas Bar ID #81001  
CPC Docket No. 2009-083

**FILED**

**OCT 27 2009**

**LESLIE W. STEEN  
CLERK**

**FINDINGS AND ORDER**

The formal charges of misconduct upon which this Findings and Order is based were developed from information obtained by the Office of Professional Conduct from various sources. The information related to the representation in 2006-2009 of various clients in Arkansas courts and elsewhere by Respondent James Scott Adams, an attorney practicing primarily in Morrilton, Conway County, Arkansas. On or about July 20, 2009, Respondent was served with a formal complaint, supported by an affidavit and court documents.

James Scott Adams, who is also the part-time District Judge of Conway County, Arkansas, engaged in private law practice continuously from prior to 2006 to present, including in matters that are detailed herein. Mr. Adams failed to timely pay his annual Arkansas law license renewal fee for 2006, 2007, 2008, and had not paid in 2009 at the time of this Complaint, as attested to by the Affidavit of Deputy Supreme Court Clerk Denise Parks. As a result, in each of those years his Arkansas law license was automatically administratively suspended on March 2 until he paid his license fee. On information and belief, Adams is licensed by no other states than Arkansas. There is no indication known to the Office of Professional Conduct that Mr. Adams ever notified any of this clients named herein that his Arkansas law license was suspended during any of these periods of license suspension.

The information about law practice by Mr. Adams within periods of license suspension came to the Office of Professional Conduct from various sources, including grievances from clients and court documents. In the matters involving clients Cole & Mallett, Gregory, Greenwood, Garrett, and Long, Mr. Adams was contacted informally by the Office of Professional Conduct, yet knowing that the Office of Professional Conduct was investigating him, he failed to timely pay his license fees for some of these years, and failed to pay at all in 2009 until August 5, 2009, after he was served with this Complaint. Mr. Adams' law license was suspended from March 2 - May 9, 2006, from March 2 - April 30, 2007, from March 2 - May 5, 2008, and from March 2 - August 5, 2009. During his 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 periods of law license suspension, Mr. Adams filed in Conway County Circuit Court alone a total of thirty (30) cases, being seven (7) civil division cases, sixteen (16) chancery (equity) division cases, and seven (7) probate division cases.

In addition to these Arkansas state court and client matters, Mr. Adams was also practicing law in three (3) federal civil court cases in the Eastern District of Arkansas during this time frame. He represented Judy/Judi Bartlett in No. 03-cv-1006 from December 22, 2003, when he filed suit for her, through September 21, 2006, when her case was dismissed, and also in No. 07-cv-846 from September 17, 2007, when he filed suit for her, through August 25, 2008, when her case was dismissed. He represented Keith Price and his minor daughter Magdelyn in No. 08-cv-0008 from December 3, 2007, when he filed suit for them in state court, through September 5, 2008, when the case, which had been removed to federal court, was dismissed.

In his Response to the Complaint filed August 7, 2009, Mr. Adams stated that thought he had paid his license fee and was now current in payment, he admitted the material allegations of

the complaint, and he attached a copy of his check dated August 5, 2009, to the Clerk for his 2009 license fee.

Upon consideration of the formal complaint and attached exhibit materials, the response to it, and other matters before it, and the Arkansas Rules of Professional Conduct, Panel A of the Arkansas Supreme Court Committee on Professional Conduct finds:

A. Scott Adams' conduct, as set forth in the attached Exhibits, violated Rule 3.4(c), in that (1) Mr. Adams failed to pay his 2006 Arkansas law license renewal fee by March 1, 2006, (2) failed to pay his 2007 Arkansas law license renewal fee by March 1, 2007, (3) failed to pay his 2008 Arkansas law license renewal fee by March 1, 2008, and (4) failed to pay his 2009 Arkansas law license renewal fee by March 1, 2009, each and all as required by Arkansas Supreme Court Rule VII.C, Rules Governing Admission to the Bar.

Arkansas Rule 3.4(c) requires that a lawyer shall not knowingly disobey an obligation under the rules of a tribunal except for an open refusal based on an assertion that no valid obligation exists.

B. Scott Adams' conduct, as set forth in the attached Exhibits, violated Rule 5.5(a), in that (1) Mr. Adams failed to pay his 2007 Arkansas law license fee by March 1, 2007, as required by Arkansas Supreme Court Rule VII.C, Rules Governing Admission to the Bar, resulting in the automatic suspension of his Arkansas law license until April 30, 2007, when he paid his 2007 license fee, and Mr. Adams practiced law while his Arkansas law license was suspended during this period; (2) Mr. Adams failed to pay his 2008 Arkansas law license fee by March 1, 2008, as required by Arkansas Supreme Court Rule VII.C, Rules Governing Admission to the Bar, resulting in the automatic suspension of his Arkansas law license until May 5, 2008,

when he paid his 2008 license fee, and Mr. Adams practiced law while his Arkansas law license was suspended during this period; and (3) Mr. Adams failed to pay his 2009 Arkansas law license fee by March 1, 2009, as required by Arkansas Supreme Court Rule VII.C, Rules Governing Admission to the Bar, resulting in the automatic suspension of his Arkansas law license until he paid for 2009, and Mr. Adams practiced law while his Arkansas law license was suspended during this period.

Arkansas Rule 5.5(a) provides that a lawyer shall not practice law in a jurisdiction in violation of the regulation of the legal profession in that jurisdiction, or assist another in doing so.

C. Scott Adams' conduct, as set forth in the attached Exhibits, violated Rule 8.4(d), in that, as a lawyer licensed since 1981 in Arkansas, Mr. Adams knew, or reasonably should have known, that he was required to pay his Arkansas law license renewal fee by March 1 each year; that his failure to do so resulted in the automatic suspension of his license until the fee was paid, and that any action he took to represent a client while his license was suspended was a nullity and could cause any action to be set aside or otherwise result in harm to his clients' interests.

Arkansas Rule 8.4(d) provides that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice;

WHEREFORE, it is the decision and order of the Arkansas Supreme Court Committee on Professional Conduct, acting through its authorized Panel A, that **JAMES SCOTT ADAMS**, Arkansas Bar ID# 81001, be, and hereby is, **REPRIMANDED** for his conduct in this matter, and ordered to pay a **\$2,500.00 FINE**, and \$50.00 case costs. The fine and costs assessed herein, totaling \$2,550.00, shall be payable by cashier's check or money order payable to the "Clerk,

Arkansas Supreme Court" delivered to the Office of Professional Conduct with thirty (30) days of the date this Findings and Order is filed of record with the Clerk of the Arkansas Supreme Court.

ARKANSAS SUPREME COURT COMMITTEE  
ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT - PANEL A

By: Steven Shults  
Steven Shults, Chair, Panel A

Date: September 28, 2009

(Rev. 3-18-06 SL)